

§ 2301.15

§ 2301.15 Withdrawal of applications.

(a) Applicants may request withdrawal of an application from consideration for funding without affecting future consideration. Withdrawn applications will be returned by the Agency.

(b) A request that the Agency defer an application for consideration in a subsequent year will be treated as a request for withdrawal.

Subpart C—Evaluation and Selection Process

§ 2301.16 Technical evaluation process.

(a) In determining whether to approve or defer a construction or planning grant application, in whole or in part, and the amount of such grant, the Agency will evaluate all the information in the application file.

(b) PTFP grants are awarded on the basis of a competitive review process. The evaluation of the applications is based upon the evaluation criteria provided under § 2301.17.

(c) The competitive review process may include the following: evaluation by PTFP staff; technical assessment by engineers; an evaluation by outside reviewers, all of whom have demonstrated expertise in either public broadcasting or distance learning; and rating by a national advisory panel, composed of representatives of major national public radio and television organizations.

(d) In acting on applications and carrying out other responsibilities under the Act, the Agency shall consult (as appropriate) with the FCC, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, state telecommunications agencies, public broadcasting agencies, organizations, and other agencies administering programs that may be coordinated effectively with Federal assistance provided under the Act; and, the state office established to review applications under Executive Order 12372, as amended by Executive Order 12416.

(e) Based upon the evaluation criteria contained in § 2301.17, the PTFP program staff will prepare summary evaluations. These will incorporate the outside reviewers' recommendations, engineering assessments, and program staff evaluations.

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§ 2301.17 Evaluation criteria for construction and planning applications.

(a) For each application that is filed in a timely manner by an applicant, is materially complete, and proposes an eligible project, the Agency will consider the evaluation criteria listed in § 2301.17(b):

(1) The criteria in paragraphs (b)(1), *Applicant qualifications*, (b)(2), *Financial qualifications*, of this section are qualifying criteria. Applications meeting the minimum qualifications on these criteria will be considered for further review.

(2) The remaining four criteria listed in § 2301.17(b) will be weighted in the evaluation as follows:

(i) Criteria in paragraph (b)(3), *Project objectives*, and (b)(4), *Urgency*, of this section will be given the most weight in the evaluation.

(ii) The remaining criteria in paragraph (b)(5), *Technical/Planning qualifications*, and (b)(4), *Special consideration*, of this section will be given less weight and are listed in descending order.

(b) *Evaluation criteria*—(1) *Applicant qualifications*: Documentation that the applicant has or will have the ability to complete the project, including having sufficient qualified personnel to operate and maintain the facility, and to provide services of professional quality.

(2) *Financial qualifications*: Documentation reflecting the applicant's ability to provide non-Federal funds required for the project, including funds for the local match and funds to cover any ineligible costs required for completion of the project; and to ensure long-term financial support for the continued operation of the facility during the Federal interest period.

(3) *Project objectives*: The degree to which the application documents that the proposed project fulfills the objectives and specific requirements of one or more of the categories set forth in § 2301.4, documents the applicant's ability to implement the proposed project and adequately justify the need for Federal funds in excess of fifty (50) percent of total project costs (see § 2301.6(b)(2)), if requested for equipment replacement, improvement, or

augmentation projects; and, in the case of planning, adequately justifies the need for Federal funds in excess of seventy five (75) percent of total project costs (see § 2301.6(a)(2)), if requested.

(4) *Urgency*: Documentation that justifies funding the proposed project during the current grant cycle or, when appropriate, that the condition of existing equipment justifies its prompt replacement.

(5)(i) *Technical qualifications* (construction applicants only). Documentation that the eligible equipment requested is necessary to achieve the objectives of the project; that the proposed costs reflect the most efficient use of Federal funds in achieving project objectives; that the equipment requested meets current industry performance standards (and FCC standards, if appropriate) and that an evaluation of alternative technologies has been completed that justifies the selection of the requested technology (where alternative technologies are possible).

(ii) *Planning Qualifications* (planning applicants only). Documentation of the feasibility of the proposed planning process and timetable for achieving the expected results; that costs proposed reflect the most efficient use of Federal funds; that the applicant has sufficient qualified staff or consultants to complete the planning project with professional results; and that an evaluation of alternative technologies will be incorporated into the plan, if appropriate.

(6) *Special Consideration*: For this evaluation criterion, applicants should demonstrate that its broadcast or non-broadcast application will achieve significant diversity in the ownership of, operation of, and participation in public telecommunications facilities. Applicants may demonstrate how their project will better serve the characteristics, values and attitudes of diverse listeners by promoting the development of more effective programming strategies, conducting station outreach projects, through audience development efforts, and through the participation of minorities and women on the Board of Directors, and in other policy making positions.

(c) The Agency will provide each applicant with guidance in the application materials on the type of documentation necessary to meet each of the above evaluation criteria.

§ 2301.18 Selection process.

(a) The PTFP Director will consider the summary evaluations prepared by program staff, rank the applications, and present recommendations to the OTIA Associate Administrator for review and approval. The Director's recommendations and the OTIA Associate Administrator's review and approval will take into account the following selection factors:

(1) The program staff evaluations, including the outside reviewers.

(2) The type of projects and broadcast priorities set forth at § 2301.4.

(3) Whether the application is for broadcast or a nonbroadcast project.

(4) Whether the applicant has any current NTIA grants.

(5) The geographic distribution of the proposed grant awards.

(6) The availability of funds.

(b) Upon approval by the OTIA Associate Administrator, the Director's recommendations will then be presented to the Selecting Official, the NTIA Administrator.

(c) The Administrator makes final award selections taking into consideration the Director's recommendations and the degree to which the slate of applications, taken as a whole, satisfies the program's stated purposes set forth at § 2301.1 (a) and (c).

(d) No grant will be awarded until confirmation has been received from the FCC that any necessary authorization will be issued.

(e) After final award selections have been made, the Agency will notify the applicant of one of the following actions:

(1) Selection of the application for funding, in whole or in part;

(2) Deferral of the application for subsequent consideration;

(3) Rejection of the application with an explanation and the reason, if an applicant is not eligible or if the proposed project does not fall within at least one of the categories enumerated at § 2301.4; or